think my father was.' Miss Livingstone is poor most of the time. Miss Carroll is the richest of us all. She draws a salary. She's my secretary."

"Well, if Miss Livingstone is poor, how can she afford to be traveling round?" Miss Le Favor demanded, with a strong accent of disapproval.

"You see, she's a painter and—"

"A painter!" Miss Le Favor repeated, incredulity augmenting the disapproval in her tone.

"She's an artist. She paints landscapes. She's just had an exhibition and sold some pictures, so she's got a little money. She and I are much interested in the world—and life. It occurred to us a little while ago that because we'd traveled so much we both knew certain—" Maxwell paused as if to recast her phrases, then obviously went on using her first choice—"certain special and precious phases of it; neither of us had seen real life. We both feel that we have never seen life in the raw—I mean as every-day people live it. So we'd decided that we'd start off on a journey and look the every-day, work-a-day world in the face. We're going straight across the continent to California, I may even write a book about it."

"Oh, I see—uplifters and highbrows."

Miss Le Favor's tone carried a stratum of disappointment.

"It sounds that way, doesn't it?" Maxwell said with unimpaired good humor. "And yet, I think we're not exactly that."

"She's full of ginger—that Miss Livingstone, isn't she? No; I shouldn't call *her* a highbrow."

"She's lived all over the world," Maxwell went on, ignoring an unconscious uncomplimentary emphasis. "She has the choicest collection of knowledge and ignorance of any human being I have ever known. She can't add, subtract, multiply, or divide as well as an eight-year-old child; and yet she has traveled, alone often, in foreign countries ever since she was eighteen, and understands their money. She knows nothing whatever about geography; yet she can draw maps of many of the biggest cities of the world. She has never studied literature or history; but she is full of surprising information about all kinds of queer countries and places. She knows nothing of grammar; and yet she can talk well in three languages and a little in three more, including Japanese. You see, her father and mother were both painters—artists—and they wandered like gypsies all over the world."

"Gee, that's the life!" Miss Le Favor approved enviously. "What's your life been like?"

"Very dull," Maxwell conceded. "Boston in the winter—or Egypt or the French Riviera—and in the summer a place in Massachusetts called Pride's Crossing. Then I went to college for four years. That's about all there is to me."

"Well, I'd call that *some* life!"

MISS LE FAVOR shut the door abruptly. When she opened it again she was dressed but for her gown.

"Can I do my hair?" she asked. She looked hard at the comb Maxwell handed her. "Ivory," she said. "Isn't that swell!"

She took the pins from her hair. The great bag dropped slowly off her head, split open, rolled over her shoulders, and spread out into a great fan of gold. She attacked it with the comb, divided it, coiled it. She started to draw on the fog-colored gown.

Maxwell watched the reflection in the glass. Pauline was a rounded creature. Her flesh was of a singular transparency, and of a delicious lush pinkness, yet without softness. For underneath that lushness lay a structure of bone and muscle that was not only definite but prominent. It was as if a body of gauze, rose-tinted and velvet-surfaced, had been fitted over a framework of iron.

"Miss Le Favor," Maxwell said, "you are a very pretty girl."

Miss Le Favor glanced at the mirror. Her eyes narrowed; her brow furrowed, and again her jaw pushed forward.

"Lot of good it's done me!" she remarked scornfully.

Maxwell made no comment. But she reached into her bag, brought out a small key, and unlocked the jewel-case that lay on the dresser-top. From it she took a gold chain that twisted into a rope ending first in a pendant of black enamel and pearl, and then in two heavy gold tassels. She threw it over Pauline's head.

"That belonged to my mother," she said.

"Gee, isn't it swell!" Pauline exclaimed.

OUTSIDE, the Avenue was growing quieter and quieter. Daylight still flickered in the air, though the street lights—like purple full moons—dripped purple reflections on the shining gray asphalt. Inside they had not lighted up. Cordelia lay on the couch, her slim blue-clad figure banked at every angle with cushions. Maxwell, who by means of her black evening gown had merged with the dusk, sat in one of the big chairs. Miss Carroll had almost disappeared in the shadow of another, her face only a white, fan-shaped plane, out of which gleamed two violet pools. Miss Le Favor sat opposite the dresser. The light from the street reflected in the mirror, and frequently she contemplated her image there.

There came a pause in conversation.

Miss Le Favor broke it ultimately.

"Well, I suppose it's time for me to loosen up," she said, with a sigh. "Of course I *wanna* tell you. That's what I started to do. And yet—I dunno that I can make you ladies understand. In some ways it's easier now than it was, and in some ways it's harder. But one thing's sure. All this makes it tougher going back. I never wore a swell dress like this before—I never sat in a swell room like this before—I never fed my face in a swell dining-room like that before. And when I think there's plenty of people can do this every night of their lives and never notice the size of the check—"

Miss Le Favor paused. Her eyes flew to the mirror.

"There ain't much of a story to tell. I earn eight dollars a week, and I can't live on it. That's it in a nut-shell. Oh, a course I *can* live on it, if I haft to; because I *have* lived on it for three years. But I don't wanna. It's too hard work. I can't stand it any longer and I ain't gonna stand it any longer. Besides—you see—there's Adolph."

She paused and did not speak for a moment. Nobody else spoke. And in the significant silence the twilight seemed to thicken and blacken and whirl.

Maxwell broke the pause. "And Adolph?" she questioned.

"Adolph—Adolph, he's my gell-man friend—well, he says that two of us can live easier off his pay and my pay than either can alone. And I guess he's said something. That's all."

"Does he—now let me be sure that I understand—" It was again Maxwell who spoke. "Does Adolph want to *marry* you?"

"No. But, say, he's on the level with me. He don't wanna marry nobody. He's got a wife somewhere that he ain't seen for years. And I—I dunno. It's such a fierce struggle and such a hard one, and nothing ahead to work for. If I seen something ahead—well, that might make a difference. I dunno that I can make you three understand. But I haft to divide that eight dollars every Saturday night into so many parts—see? Two dollars for rent—fifty cents for breakfasts—seventy-five cents for lunches—one dollar and seventy-five cents for dinners. There ain't much left, believe me, for a soda or a movie-show—let alone a trip to Coney. I get so tired countin' out that money every week. It don't seem like it belonged to me somehow—it seems like it only passed through my hands. I don't ever get nothing out of it that I want—only things that I've gotta have. Sometimes it seems like to me, I'd rather take a high dive off the bridge than go on dividing that money.

"So—well—last night I made up my mind that I was gonna say yes to Adolph. And then I started to read the paper about this parade. And I says to myself, 'Kid, I'm going to give you one more chance. There'll be lots of ladies in that bunch who are good and kind and would help you if you told them the truth. You go up to Forty-foirst Street and stick aroun' till you see some doll that looks like she'd understand, and then you go to it and tell her.' Well, believe me, I looked at ladies for two hours, but I didn't see nobody I wanted to open up to till you three came along." She addressed herself to Maxwell. "I spoke to you because you look like a swell that ain't a snob."

"Maxwell drew the opal pendant out of the box. Black as night, all the flame of a volcano burned at its heart."

PRESENTLY she went on. Her voice had taken on a sulky stridency.

"I love nice clothes and hats and shoes and gloves, and I want to have them before I die. I like to go to swell theayters and eat at swell restaurants, and I want to do it before I die. I like to go to dances and have a good time with the fellers, and I want to go before I die. I can't get a good time and stay straight. That's Gawd's truth. Anyhow, I ain't got it yet. And I wanna good time more'n I wanna stay straight. And if any one you got anything to say about it, you jess try living on eight dollars a week for three years. I don't mean for one week, or one month, or one year. I mean three years. And you jess try lookin' ahead and seein' the years stretching on and on, and all you can hear is, 'Two dollars for the room, fifty cents for breakfasts, seventy-five cents for lunches, one dollar and seventy-five cents for dinners,' and you getting homelier and homelier every day until you dry up into a fierce old maid that every one hates, who spends all her days yappin' and snappin' and rappin', and all her nights shiverin' and worryin' and cryin' for fear some chicken's going to get her job. Until you tried it yourself, don't you be knocking me."

Her voice, which had risen to a rough raucousness, crescendoed in a fury of passionate resentment.

"WE won't knock in any circumstance, Miss Le Favor," Maxwell said. "And I'll admit I don't like to think how long I'd last in those conditions."

Cordelia came to an upright position.

"Do you know what I'd do?" she demanded. She shot her long arms to their most indignant horizontal, then to their most despairing vertical. "I'd steal!"

"Well, girlie, that wouldn't get you anywhere," Miss Le Favor asserted sardonically, "except Blackwell's Island."

"Do you mind telling me how old you are, Miss Le Favor?" Maxwell asked.

"Nineteen," Miss Le Favor answered.

"Are your parents living?"

"No."

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No."

"Have you always lived in New York?"

"Yes."

"Go to school here?"

"Yes. I didn't graduate from the grammar school. My father and mother died, and I had to go to work."

"What do you do?"

"Book-binder."

"How did you manage before you made eight dollars a week?"

"I lived with a cousin for a while. Then they moved out West."

"Is there anything you can do—or that you want to do? Have you any knack for dressmaking or millinery?"

"No; I hate sewing. Of course I can think of a lot of things I'd like to do. I'd like to be a swell stenographer with a swell gentleman for a boss and a swell office all furnished up grand at the top of a sky-scraper. But how'd I learn to be a stenographer? Where'd I get the time or the money? Once a lady advised me to get a job at housework. You get better paid and better fed, she said. And she's right.

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